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AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

NEW PUBLICATION ON HEMISPHERIC AGRICULTURE DUE IN JANUARY: A new monthly publication, "AGRICULTURE IN THE AMERICAS", will go to press late in January. It will be published by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations based on material furnished largely by the recently organized Division of Latin American Agriculture. The subject matter will interpret hemispheric agricultural problems and their relation to domestic problems. The magazine will be available by SUBSCRIPTION, although rates have not yet been set by the Government Printing office. The other monthly OFAR publication, "FOREIGN AGRICULTURE", also will be made available by subscription and the rates for the two publications probably will be announced at the same time. In addition to special articles on foreign agriculture, "FOREIGN AGRICULTURE" from now on will carry the longer commodity reviews and statements on international agricultural trade appearing heretofore in the weekly "Foreign Crops and Markets".

COTTON RUBBER BARTER DEAL NEARS COMPLETION: Great Britain has accepted delivery at U.S. ports on more than 150,000 bales of barter cotton during the last three months while delivering more than 5,000 tons of rubber to the U.S. This practically concludes the cotton-rubber barter deal which originally called for about 600,000 bales of cotton swapped for about 88,000 tons of rubber on a value for value basis. The last count by the Commodity Credit Corporation shows all of the 600,000 bales of cotton delivered to Britain. The CCC has received, or has shipping receipts for, over 92,000 tons of rubber. CCC has accepted over 80,000 tons. The total receipts exceed the 88,000 tons agreed upon because of some rejections of below-grade rubber.

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: ITALY: Effective December 1, bread must be produced from flour containing 75 parts wheat flour and 25 parts corn flour. The compulsory admixture was decreed in order to reduce the consumption of wheat, because of the short wheat crop harvested this year.

It was announced officially that all services relating to the production and marketing of military and civilian food supplies was centralized in the Ministry of Agriculture. New regulations governing the distribution of rationed foods are to be issued shortly. The announcement follows temporary shortages of salt, potatoes and spaghetti in Rome and reported general dissatisfaction with the existing rationing system. Hoarding will be considered a crime against the state and will be punishable by death in serious cases.

UNITED KINGDOM: The Ministry of Food advises that bread prices will be maintained at existing levels. The Ministry is reported to have proposed paying to the baking trade a subsidy of 4 s. (80.5 cents) per sack of flour used. This is equivalent to 1/4 d. (0.42 cents) per loaf.

The Ministry of Food announced maximum retail prices for domestic apples effective December 26 at 1 shilling (20 cents) per pound for Cox Orange Pippin, Laxton Superb, and Allison Orange. Less popular varieties may sell at a maximum of 10d. (17 cents) per pound. Current market supplies and supplies in storage are very low.

RUSSIA: Recent trade agreements with Hungary, Slovakia and Yugoslavia provide for shipments of Russian cotton to those countries. Such shipments have not begun as yet but are expected soon. A similar agreement is being discussed with Bulgaria.

IRAQ: British banks in Iraq have received instructions from London to refuse all applications for dollar exchange. Apparently Iraqi dollar exchange, resulting from exports to the United States, has been used for purchases from Japan. The effect of this situation will be to throttle purchases by Iraq from the United States until steps are taken by the Government of Iraq to control dollar credits for American purchases.

SWITZERLAND: The January ration card permits the retail sale to individuals possessing a card of the following items and quantities: sugar 750 grams; macaroni products 500 grams; flour 1,000 grams; edible fats 400 grams, of which 200 grams are interchangeable for other fats and oils; butter 400 grams of which 100 grams are interchangeable for other edible fats. The ration for other food items remains the same as that for December.

BELGIUM: The Military Governor for Belgium announced that payments between Belgium and Bulgaria are to be cleared through Berlin. The new arrangement is significant as a further extension of the proposed German clearing system by which Berlin would become the exchange center of the Continent and the Reichsmark the accepted medium of foreign currency conversion. The Belgo-Bulgarian payments will include not only the proceeds of commercial sales but also transportation charges, insurance premiums, professional fees, copyrights, pensions, annuities, consular expenses, and royalties.

GREECE: The monthly steamship service between Piraeus and New York will be operated by the Greek Government instead of by a private company with first sailing from Piraeus about February 1 via South Africa. In the meantime the Greek Government has released four vessels to Embirices for special trips to the United States during the next four weeks to transport American owned tobacco.

ARGENTINA: Contemplated purchases of Argentine beef by the United Kingdom during the second year of the war are equivalent to the average British purchases for the period 1936-38, but about 30,000 metric tons below purchases during 1939. Contemplated British purchases and sales to other markets will mean that total Argentine beef exports in 1940 will be 30 percent below those for 1939 and about 15 percent below the average exports for 1936-38. Assuming supplies of slaughtered cattle equal to last year, Argentine officials estimate that the loss in the export market by reason of the reduced British purchases and the closing of the continental market will mean a considerable surplus for canning.

